



Country Mayors Association of NEW SOUTH WALES

Chairperson: Cr Katrina Humphries
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14 November 2018

To Regional and Rural Councils

Dear Mayors and General Managers

Tenterfield Shire Council, in conjunction with the New England Joint Organisation, has undertaken significant research into Waste to Energy at a local scale and provided a comprehensive presentation to our Association's meeting held on 3 August 2018 at which Country Mayors agreed to support the initiatives to make Waste to Energy at a local level a reality. This position was further strengthened by an Energy to Waste Forum facilitated by the Department of Premier and Cabinet for Country Mayors members held 1 November 2018 where a number of industry experts spoke about the benefits of this technology, providing examples of its effectiveness in operations in other states. We believe that this technology provides a real opportunity for our councils to deal with the issue of waste in a more cost effective manner.

In order to progress this matter further, financial assistance is being requested to enable the completion of a comprehensive feasibility study to determine whether a pilot plant being built at this time is warranted. Country Mayors is writing to all country councils seeking financial support for the project as the outcome will be of benefit to all.

To assist in making your decision, information has been supplied by Terry Dodds, Chief Executive of Tenterfield Shire Council, who is leading this project and this information is provided below in italics:

“Waste to Energy – What is the study about?”

Councils are increasingly coming under pressure on waste, whether it be problems with recyclables, costs of implementing new waste systems or simply costs of disposal – either locally, or shipping waste elsewhere.

Waste to Energy is one of the range of solutions which may be able to assist decrease the amount of waste going to landfill. Technologies are well developed overseas, and can perform to extremely high environmental standards. Many of these projects are, however, very large and only applicable at high population levels. The question the study needs to answer is: What is the smallest scale at which economic waste to energy projects can occur? Western Australia is making significant progress in this area, including in regional areas at Port Hedland, however one single project at the smaller scale is not indicative of the range of regional needs within NSW or indeed elsewhere in Australia.

There is a Waste to Energy Policy in NSW, but it is a very difficult path not only to gain approval, but to even gain interest from the wider industry; both in Australia and internationally. The policy is under

review, and Country Mayors recently resolved to request the full involvement of regional councils in that review. To fully participate in this review, we need to have our own independent work done that focuses on the needs of regional councils. Policy change is needed, for Waste to Energy to take its place as part of the waste hierarchy and the waste to energy supply mix.

Regional councils have specific issues of lower population densities, longer travel distances and higher overall costs. There is a strong view that policy needs to consider regional areas in a different way to, say, Western Sydney. In short, the cookie cutter approach currently fails regional areas. The study will look, among other things, at:

- What is the overall legislative and regulatory context?
- What are the available technologies that can meet appropriate environmental standards?
- Which of these are scalable to regional areas?
- How do the economics of waste to energy work, including issues such as gate fees, operating costs, but also looking at avoided costs such as lower costs to landfill, lower transport costs and the like.
- What are the environmental offsets gained; reduction in methane, sulphur, leachate and CO₂.
- What are the practical operational aspects that need to be resolved, including site location, energy output and grid connections, financing, maintenance and management of risk?
- Other than electricity production, what other uses are available; diesel production, steam for industry, biogas etc.
- How can we be confident of the technologies, and the science behind them? Fully independent experts need to review this – people with no industry or regulator ties.

Case study areas will be chosen to be representative of a wide range of regional contexts.

Who is leading the study?

The lead Council is Tenterfield Shire Council, with support from Moree Plains Shire Council and Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland.

How much will the study cost?

To ensure the study is comprehensive and of most benefit, we expect the study to cost \$540,000. This is essential if it is to have widespread credibility and cover social, environmental as well as financial bottom lines.

How long will it take?

Ideally, we would like to complete the study within 6 months of confirmation of full funding for the study being achieved.

Who owns the output?

The outputs of the study will be owned and available for use to all contributing councils. The study will help all participants make better, more informed decisions about waste and waste to energy in the future and how waste to landfill can be reduced.

How much do we need to pay?

We are asking for \$15,000 per Council although higher contributions will be accepted. We would like to be able to fund the entire study from local government resources and have full control. If we do get a grant, and find we have excess funds, then the payments by councils will be reduced in proportion.

Please see the account details for Tenterfield Shire as follows:

<i>National Australia Bank</i>	<i>The Council of the Shire of Tenterfield</i>	<i>082-829</i>	<i>509913697</i>
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If Councils transfer funds via EFT can they please ensure that their Council name and Waste to Energy is in the description. If a tax invoice is required, please advise.

Where can I get more information?

Councils are encouraged to contact Tery Dodds, Chief Executive of Tenterfield Shire Council for further information. He can be contacted via email on t.dodds@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au or via mobile on 0400 263 932."

The preparation of this study could lead to considerable financial advantages for country councils as well as providing a solution for waste management which is a huge burden on all of our councils. I hope you will consider this request favourably and seek out additional information should you wish to know more.

Yours sincerely



Cr Katrina Humphries
Chairperson